

The Baptist Record

JOURNAL OF THE MISSISSIPPI BAPTIST CONVENTION

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Published Since 1877

Pastor's church by the wharf led to seaman's ministry

By Kevin Devine

NEW ORLEANS (BP) — As the recently retired founder and director of the New Orleans Baptist Seaman's Service, John Vandercook has seen thousands of men from around the globe climb the narrow concrete stairs to his home in a quiet residential area of New Orleans. For 30 years they have come in search of encouragement, direction, and fellowship, leaving behind the small expressions of gratitude which now fill the Vandercook home.

The Baptist Seaman's Service was started in the winter of 1962-63 and incorporated in 1964 in New Orleans, one of the world's most trafficked and internationally used ports. The ministry has risen to the challenge of meeting the physical, emotional, and spiritual needs of merchant seamen from virtually every seafaring nation on earth, a daunting task, but one accomplished by meeting the modest needs of the moment.

"It will never cease to amaze me how grateful people are for something as simple as a kind word or quiet conversation when they are far from home," Vandercook recounted.

"When you can't speak to one another, an arm around a shoulder communicates very well," Vandercook said.

Growing up on the outskirts of Little Rock, Ark., Vandercook "heard lots of sermons, but the gospel never seemed to get through." It was only through a series of events after the outbreak of World War II that this young man from the country came to know Jesus.

"I enlisted in the Navy and soon after found myself in the South Pacific," Vandercook said. "My outfit managed to get in on a lot of the early island fighting. John Wayne is a favorite of mine but I can't watch those old war movies; we saw too much of the real thing."

After a year of "island hopping," Vandercook accepted the opportunity to attend Officers Candidate School, then located at Mississippi College.

"The two most important relationships in my life were formed at Mississippi College," Vandercook said. The first relationship was with a young lady named Catherine Gunn, who within the year would become Mrs. John Vandercook. The second relationship was with Jesus.

"W.O. Vaught was preaching a revival at the college; after all those years, the Lord finally broke through to me and I was born

again," Vandercook said.

Shortly after the war Vandercook left the service and came to realize his new lifestyle would be even more challenging than he first thought. Heeding God's call to full-time Christian service, Vandercook was ordained to the ministry in 1949 by First Church in Yazoo City. He enrolled as a student in the bachelor of divinity program at New Orleans Seminary.

During the 1950s Vandercook served as pastor to several churches in Louisiana and Mississippi; in the early 1960s he returned to New Orleans to become the pastor of the small congregation of Third Street Church. It was at Third Street Church, "hard by the river," as he described it, that his life's ministry came into focus.

Encountering several seamen on the street one afternoon in 1962, Vandercook listened as the men told of the great spiritual need among their companions. Many

seamen were far removed from a Christian lifestyle, either from ignorance or defiance, and desperately needed the witness of the gospel. Those who did know Christ, or those who were seeking him, felt stranded aboard ship because of transportation difficulties and the barrier of language.

Stirred by their plight, Vandercook led the Third Street Church to begin a ministry to seamen. "We would go to the ships and personally invite the sailors to services and activities at the church," he said. With the church only a few blocks away, transportation proved no problem.

Within a year the sheer volume of the ministry threatened to overwhelm the tiny church, and Vandercook was faced with a heart-wrenching decision: watch the seaman's ministry struggle for lack of attention and resources or leave the church he loved to devote himself full-time to the seaman's ministry. On Aug. 1, 1964, Vander-

cook's living room officially became the site of the first full-time Southern Baptist seaman's ministry.

For the next 12 years the Vandercook home was the center of ministry activity. Each day Vandercook would make contact with newly arrived sailors, sharing the gospel, and making arrangements for everything from doctor visits to sightseeing trips. Evenings were filled with Bible study, recreation, and fellowship.

So much a part of family life was the seaman's ministry that Vandercook's youngest son, Philip, celebrated his first birthday with a party on the deck of a Liberian freighter. With the recent retirement of his father who has served as the first and only director of the Seaman's Service since its inception, Philip continues the family commitment to the ministry by succeeding his father as director. Philip also is a current master of divinity degree student at New Orleans Seminary.

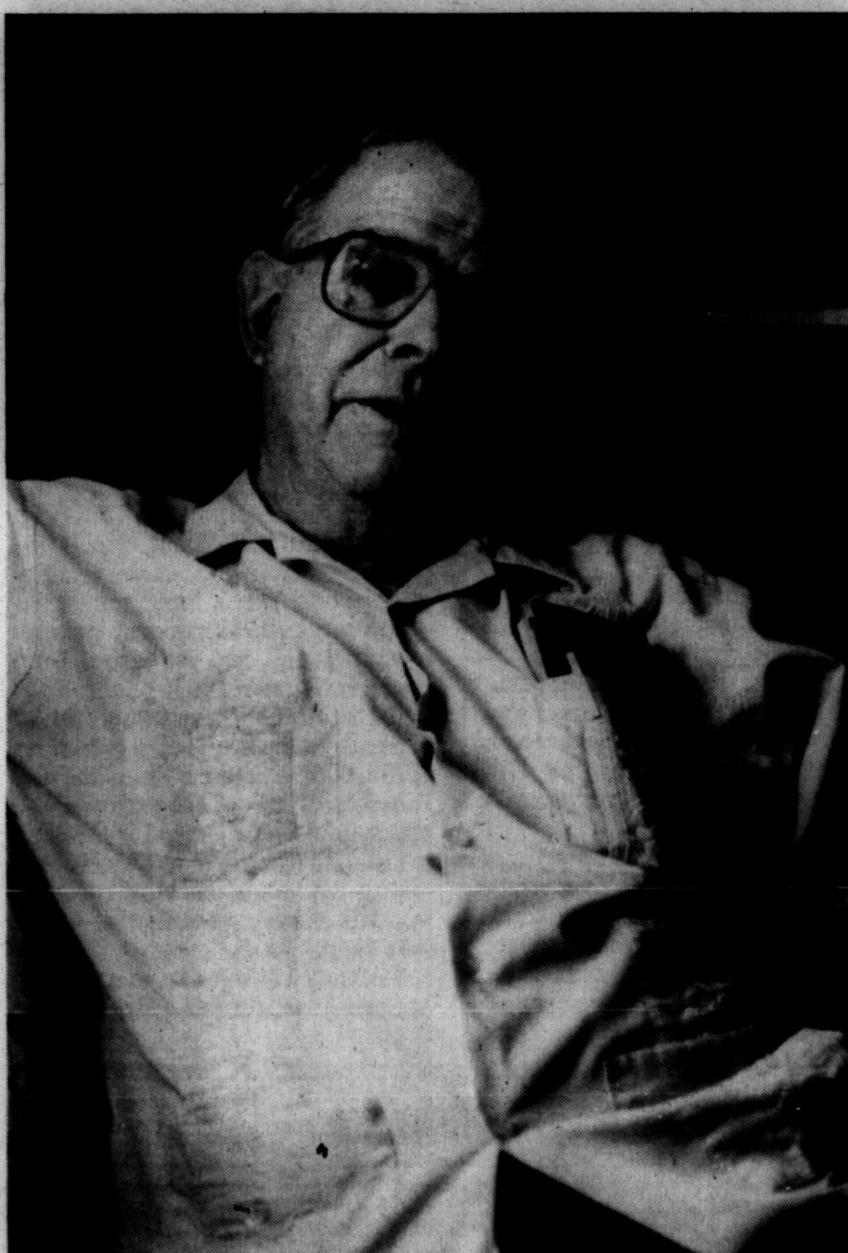
The Seaman's Service — now supported by the Home Mission Board, state, and associational funds, as well as direct gifts from local churches and individuals, has had influence reaching far beyond

the docks on Julia Street.

"Once we began to have small successes in reaching merchant sailors with the gospel, the word began to spread to other Baptists living in port cities and we began to receive requests to share how the work was done," Vandercook said. When Vandercook's ministry became incorporated in 1964, Baptists had no organized work among seamen. Now, as a direct result of Vandercook's pioneering efforts, there are more than 30 Baptist seaman's centers in port cities around the United States.

These cities include Mobile, Ala.; Anchorage, Alaska; Los Angeles and Long Beach, Calif.; Wilmington, Del.; Jacksonville, Fort Lauderdale, Pensacola, Port Everglades, and Tampa, Fla.; New Brunswick and Savannah, Ga.; Chicago; Burns Harbor, Ind.; Baton Rouge, Convent and Lake Charles, La.; Baltimore; Detroit; Gulfport and Pascagoula, Miss.; Camden, N.J.; Portland, Ore.; Philadelphia; Georgetown and Charleston, S.C.; Brownsville, Freeport, and Galveston, Texas; Norfolk and Richmond, Va.; and Everett, Wash.

Devine writes for New Orleans Seminary.



John Vandercook

L.A. pastor urges churches to utilize global changes

MILL VALLEY, Calif. (BP) — Recent changes in world outlook have given churches unprecedented opportunity to minister across the globe, a California pastor said.

"You have the opportunity as never before to give yourself and to lead your people wherever God places you... as never, never, never before in human history," said Tom Wolf, speaking at Golden Gate Seminary's December commencement.

Wolf is pastor of The Church on Brady in Los Angeles. Turbulent changes around the world in recent years have shifted thinking in several key areas, he pointed out.

"In governmental consensus, we have moved so that there is now a global consensus concerning participatory democracy over revolutionary dictatorship," Wolf said. "There has emerged worldwide an economic consensus toward a market-driven, competitive-driven, private sector economy...."

However, consensus about "world culture" has not yet formed, according to Wolf, because of contention between four dominant

belief systems:

— Incumbent humanism. "Humanism is not dead. It is incumbent and still reigns, but it is being challenged."

— Neo-animism. "People of the Third World... understand animism because they live with it." It is a battle for the understanding of the spirit world that even the western world is facing as never before, Wolf said.

— Militant Islam. Islam now exceeds the number of committed Christians in England and is growing rapidly in the United States, Wolf said.

— Evangelical Christianity. "Of a certain vibrant and powerful kind that knows the Scripture and knows the power of God in its life."

Wolf said it is this kind of evangelical Christianity that is turning Latin America Protestant at a faster rate than northern Europe turned Protestant during the Reformation — and the kind that must challenge the Islamic world and other faiths capturing the hearts and minds of people throughout the world.

EDITOR'S NOTEBOOK

Perishable — Handle with prayer

Baptists have made cooperation their trademark. It is a necessity if the SBC continues as a viable operation. We became noted for cooperation, and other denominations have wondered how it could be done without a bishop or a pope. Conventions, associations, and churches are autonomous. However, conventions and associations are not quite so autonomous as the churches. They depend on the churches for their very existence.

Prior to 1845, Northern and Southern Baptists shared an equal interest in missions. Luther Rice and Adoniram Judson had been effective in promoting home and foreign missions. In 1845 various differences led to a division and the SBC was formed. One purpose was declared: "Eliciting, combining, and directing the energies of the whole denomination in one sacred effort for the propagation of the Gospel."

Societies were formed to support foreign missions, another for home missions, and one for orphanages, schools, etc. Societies answered only to their contributing members. This resulted in little cooperation and much competition for members and dollars. The associations and conventions had many emotional appeals, overlapping pledge campaigns,

and most often there were emergency appeals. Men were employed to travel the convention and raise funds. Pledges were taken and special offerings were forced upon the churches most every Sunday.

Debts began to pile up, borrowing was a scourge, and lack of debt payment a near disgrace. By 1919 Baptists faced a near-death crisis. Leaders proposed the 75 Million Campaign as the solution that would encompass everything in the SBC and state conventions. People were excited over it. The amount staggered their minds and the giving habits of Baptists underwent a change. Pledges came in exceeding the goal. Not all were fully paid, but still it made an impact. Perhaps the greatest benefit was that Southern Baptists discovered cooperation.

By 1925 the SBC Cooperative Program was off and running. We were doing together what we could not do alone. Churches sent money to the state convention. There it was divided according to the wishes of the state convention budget — usually about two-thirds remaining in the state and one-third going for the SBC.

States used their money to fund education, orphanages, state mission projects, and promotion of Sunday School, Training Union,

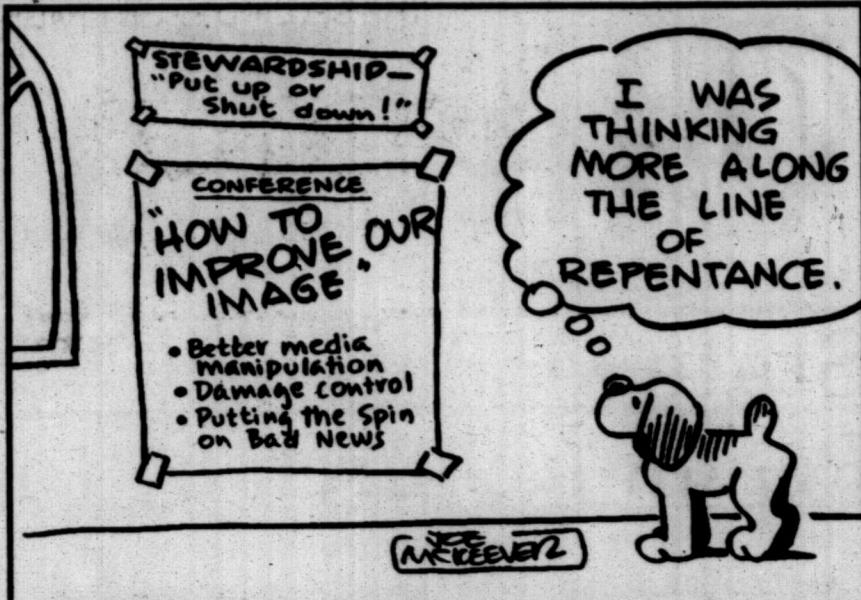
social concerns, and to promote the Cooperative Program. The SBC divided its amount among the home and foreign mission boards and our seminaries.

For almost 70 years, cooperation, trust, and confidence led Southern Baptists to become a strong Christian force in the U.S.A. and the world.

Now dangerous cracks are appearing. Trust and confidence have been eroded. The glue which holds us together has hardened, and callousness is about to exact its price. We've long noted the fragility of the Cooperative Program but surely love and longevity would hold us together. This "rope of sand" which has been so effective can be broken.

Cooperation requires some forfeiture of individualism. We can't all be the quarterback. Baptist bodies can encourage, request, and persuade, but they cannot dictate to each other. This is the Baptist way and we've come a long way in cooperation using this principle.

Are we in danger of returning to the societal method when cooperation has worked so well? Have we changed that much in mutual trust and confidence? The Cooperative Program is fragile, even perishable. We must handle it with care... and prayer.



Thank you, Brother Paul

Paul Simmons has taught for 22 years as ethics professor at Southern Seminary in Louisville, Ky. He has resigned and Southern Baptists can breathe easier. Simmons, 56, has been the center of controversy since 1987 when his views on abortion and homosexuality surfaced. Within two years some seminary trustees were calling for his dismissal.

Simmons had tenure and without an overt act of not fulfilling his contract, he could not be fired. Various committees, trustees, etc., met and tried to iron it out, sweep it under the carpet, buy him out, and threaten him. The trustees met to discuss the "buy out his contract" effort. The price was \$362,000 (roughly six years salary and benefits) which may have been much less expensive than a

heresy trial. However, the trustees refused to buy out the contract and some were demanding the heresy trial. Such a trial would have been costly, disruptive, and a morale killer.

In late December, Simmons was teaching an advanced course in "the ethics of rehabilitative therapy for spinal-cord injured patients" and showed a 15 minute video to the class on "the church and sexuality." Formal complaints were filed against him and he was placed under administrative review.

Suddenly Simmons announced he would retire. There must have been a collective SBC sigh that may have registered on the Richter scale. No buy out, no heresy trial, just a decision made to resign. Thanks, Paul. — GH

Fumbling in the dark

Fumbles in a football game are usually costly. You can lose the ball, or recover it but lose ground. It appears that Mississippi College has committed a fumble of significant proportion. Like we are right up there with SMU, Auburn, or Texas A&M. The truth and virtue company has been trapped off-base and all of us are reaping the embarrassment. Even the NCAA, which has handled some major fumbles, says the MC infraction is "one of the more serious cases."

How did a small, Division II, Baptist-affiliated school, which historically majors on academics rather than sports, rate a four-year probation, lose its 1989 national championship trophy, and get banned from live television in 1993?

In the 1989-90 academic year 98 student-athletes received a total of \$258,606 in related financial aid. This is considerably above the grant-in-aid limit of 40 for Division II institutions. Was the NCAA using MC as a warning to other schools or have we seen only the tip of a sports-crazed iceberg?

Recently I saw a film of a mission meeting taking place in another

country. One of the kids had on a T-shirt proclaiming Mississippi College to be the national champs in Division II. What do I tell him now?

Former coach John Williams has accepted part of the responsibility but implied others had to be aware of what was taking place. As always, there is enough guilt to be shared among all of us. Coaches, administration, fans, and alumni can all lay claim to part of it. We reached for too much and got our hands slapped.

Now we pick up the shattered pieces and press on. We read again why the school was founded and the high principles to which we aspire. Hopefully we place athletics in the right perspective and make academics the subject for T-shirt dissertations. If scholarships were given to recruit children of monied alumni, ministers, and potential contributors, as stated by fired-coach John Williams, then a deeper investigation is warranted.

Trying to hide this in a cloud of silence will only result in deeper hurt and a longer period of investigation. — GH

Guest opinion...

Doing Church in the 1990s

By Martin Thelen

At a church growth conference I attended in March 1992, I heard Lyle Schaller say: "If next year is 1953, American churches are going to be in good shape. However, if next year is 1993, then most American churches are in serious trouble."

Schaller is absolutely right. During my travels over the past four years, I've visited many of our churches. For the most part, they are still doing business the way they did in the 1950s. And churches that continue to do business the way they did in the 1950s will soon be out of business.

In his powerful book, *Dying for Change*, Leith Anderson illustrates this truth by referring to a well-known television commercial. "This is not your father's Oldsmobile" sang the advertising jingle, attempting to attract younger buyers for the troubled General Motors division. Anderson said his dad drove a 1954 Oldsmobile convertible, and he

loved it. However, Anderson notes that as wonderful as that car was back in 1954, it is not a car for the 1990s. It had no seat belt, no air conditioning, no cassette deck, no radial tires, no pollution control equipment, and no cruise control.

Automobiles have changed with the times. However, most churches have not. Many churches are offering the same programs, schedules, styles of worship, ministry, and evangelism that they did in the 1950s. Unfortunately, lots of these are no longer effective in today's world.

Don't misunderstand. Our message and mission have not changed — they are timeless. However, the methods we use to communicate our message and to accomplish our mission must change with each generation. If not, we'll grow ineffective and irrelevant. The world has changed dramatically since 1950. Effective churches have changed to meet the challenge. However, many churches, perhaps

most of them, have not kept up with the changing times.

In the April issue of *Growing Churches*, Win Arn notes that about 85% of the churches in the United States are plateaued or declining and that the church appears to be losing its influence in America. The old way of doing business just isn't working any more. We desperately need new ways of doing church that will be effective in the 1990s.

In the 1950s, Sunday School was almost exclusively age graded and met at the church building on Sunday mornings before worship. However, in the 1990s, many growing churches are moving toward lifestyle graded Bible classes and offer numerous meeting times and places.

In the 1950s, worship style was traditional, and services were held at 11 a.m. on Sunday. But in the 1990s, growing churches are seeking more innovation in their worship. (See CHURCH on page 9)

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State leaders say WMU's plan expands mission opportunities

By Teresa Dickens

TALLADEGA, Ala. (ABP) — What do the changes made by national Woman's Missionary Union mean to state WMU programs across the Southern Baptist Convention? The answers given by state WMU executive directors range from "nothing" to "everything."

Under a plan adopted Jan. 10, the national women's organization will support the missions programs of other Southern Baptist groups such as the moderate Cooperative Baptist Fellowship, forge relationships with evangelical missions organizations outside the SBC, become more involved in direct missions through volunteers, and become active in social issues.

"We will continue to do all the things we have done before," said Willene Pierce from the Maryland/Delaware convention. "There is a lot to do in missions education and we don't intend to back down one iota."

"We have a variety of churches in our convention," she added. "Some will be distressed, others excited about the decisions the WMU board made. My hope is that we will be given a chance to communicate with them what the changes actually mean. Words on paper don't always communicate."

"I believe the changes will give WMU an opportunity to do more in missions and missions education," Pierce commented. "I especially like the greater emphasis on

volunteerism and social issues. Those are areas I have been thinking about for some time. I'm glad they were included."

Earlene Jessee from Virginia said the changes will be "very important in my state. Our convention is very diverse. The recommendations we adopted provide a model for us to be able to do missions. They open the door for us to work with all of our churches."

Attributing the WMU board's decision to "a movement of God's Spirit," Jessee declared: "Our move was not an attempt to alienate ourselves politically. We want to involve everyone in missions and missions education."

"I'm especially pleased with the decision to print generic missions education materials," said Betty Lynn Cadle from the Minnesota/Wisconsin convention. "The sale of these materials may validate our work to other evangelical groups, especially in our area of the country. Southern Baptists are often seen as a cult there. Biblically based missions material with our name on it will go a long way in explaining who we are and what we believe."

Cadle also noted divine intervention in the decisions of the board. "I believe we followed God's leadership in an effort to find more ways to lead church members to participate in the spreading of the gospel. We also acknowledged the reality that it is going to take all

evangelicals working together to win our nation to Christ."

"I view the decision as very positive and forward thinking, not revolutionary," remarked Marjean Patterson from Mississippi. "It is an attempt to involve different kinds of women in missions."

Like Pierce from Maryland/Delaware, Patterson doesn't foresee changes in the way WMU work is done in her state. "We are going to continue to promote the Cooperative Program through Mississippi Baptist churches the way we traditionally and historically have done."



FOR THE SAKE OF LOST SOULS

— National WMU Executive Director Dellanna O'Brien said actions taken by WMU during its Jan. 9-13 board meeting were for the "sake of lost souls." O'Brien challenged WMU to be the one entity within the SBC to which all people can relate. (WMU photo by Dan Bryan)

Open letters expand on WMU decisions

Dear Mississippi Baptists:

The first thing I did upon returning to my office this morning following an absence of over a week was to check on Lottie Moon receipts during January. I was pleased to see that almost \$1,000,000 had come in from our churches during the first half of January.

Seeing this bit of good news for all of us reminds me of what we in Mississippi WMU are all about — educating our people about missions, leading them to pray for missionaries, and giving money to help make the gospel available to people all over the world.

This is what we shall continue to be — and do. Mississippi Woman's Missionary Union affirms the support of Southern Baptist global missions through prayer, the Cooperative Program, the Lottie Moon Offering for Foreign Missions, and the Annie Armstrong Easter Offering for Home Missions. We affirm the missionaries and pledge to strengthen our support of them. We also affirm the right of individuals and churches to choose other plans for cooperative missions giving.

Thank you for the prayers you have prayed for missions, the money you have given to missions, and the leadership you have supplied people in your churches in missions education over the years.

— Marjean Patterson, Mississippi WMU director

An Open Letter to Southern Baptists:

In a historic meeting January 9-13, Woman's Missionary Union adopted a new vision for the future. We identified basic values which are and always have been at the very heart of our existence. Growing out of those, recommendations were adopted to move us into the future.

The recommendations challenge us to use contemporary approaches to ministry and missions involvement as we fulfill our missions purpose. Each recommendation concerns an aspect that WMU has long considered foundational to the missions cause of our organization, such as prayer support, missions education, personal involvement in missions, and mission support. The recommendation to accept contributions enables WMU to fulfill its missions role more effectively.

The decisions we made this week have grown out of our love of Southern Baptist missions. Our desire is to support our missionaries and to provide educational materials for those who share in our commitment to the missions enterprise. Following lengthy open discussion, the final report of The Committee was adopted unanimously by WMU leaders from throughout the nation.

For many years we have partnered with the Brotherhood Commission to support unselfishly the Southern Baptist Home and Foreign Mission Boards. It is our intent that none of the actions

taken at this meeting change any of these relationships which are so important to us.

Just as individuals, churches and other Southern Baptist entities are looking for ways to make the church relevant in the 21st century, WMU has found it necessary to find new ways to help individuals and churches fulfill the Great Commission mandate. The actions we have taken will empower WMU to be more effective in reaching the world for Jesus Christ and will enable us to assist Southern Baptist churches and other evangelicals who need resources that WMU can provide to more effectively reach a lost world.

When Woman's Missionary Union was begun in 1888, the women made a deliberate choice to support Southern Baptist missions. We want you to know that our choice is the same today.

We are truly co-laborers together — partners in the endeavor to make a world of difference for Christ as we move confidently and boldly into this new era. We covet your prayer support and encouragement. In return, we pledge to you our love and our continued, deep commitment to Southern Baptist missions.

— Members of the WMU Executive Board
— State WMU directors

New partnership coordinators put missionary skills to work

By William H. Perkins Jr.

A career missionary couple with strong Mississippi ties has been selected as field side coordinators for the Mississippi/Zimbabwe Partnership project, according to Paul Harrell, director of the Brotherhood Department of the Mississippi Baptist Convention Board (MBCB).

Dewey E. Merritt, currently serving as associate director of the Volunteers in Missions Department at the SBC Foreign Mission Board in Richmond, Va., and his wife, Betty, will depart for the African nation on Feb. 1. They will serve for the two years remaining under a three-year partnership agreement between MBCB and Baptist leaders in Zimbabwe.

Dewey Merritt was born in Hattiesburg, and received both bachelor and master of arts degrees from Mississippi College. He also holds a master of divinity degree from New Orleans Seminary and a doctor of divinity degree from Hannibal-LaGrange College in Missouri. His Mississippi pastorates included Wayne County, Charleston, and Magnolia.

Betty Merritt was born in Louisville, Ky., while her father was a student at Southern Seminary. She was baptized into the fellowship of Calvary Church in Tupelo and attended Mississippi College, where she met her soon-to-be husband in her senior year.

The Merritts were appointed by the SBC Foreign Mission Board in April of 1956 as missionaries to Nigeria, where they served for 20 years before returning to the U.S. Dewey served as principal of the Baptist Pastors' School in Kaduna and as a general evangelist, while Betty taught at the Pastors' School and served as an advisor, writer, and illustrator for the Woman's Missionary Union (WMU) program.

Harrell said he was "deeply pleased" that the Zimbabwean government had granted the Merritts' work permit in record time, and he characterized the government's effort as "exceptional."



Dewey Merritt Betty Merritt

ernment had granted the Merritts' work permit in record time, and he characterized the government's effort as "exceptional."

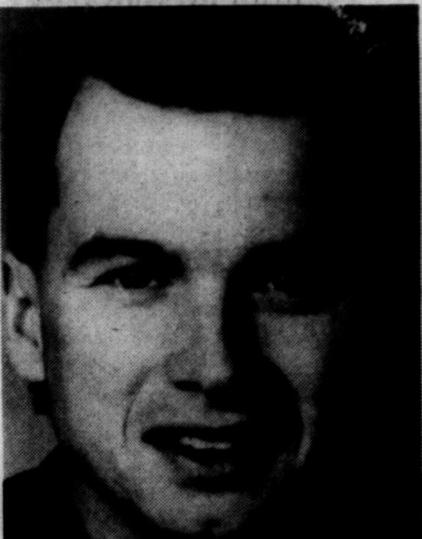
"The Merritts are uniquely qualified for their new role; having served in Nigeria for 20 years, they have a strong perception of how to work with national leaders of African nations. Being Mississippians means they will also have a strong feel for the volunteers that will be going to Zimbabwe in 1993," he pointed out.

Harrell said volunteer teams are now being recruited for seven church-starting trips to Zimbabwe that are planned for 1993. The Merritts will guide the volunteers toward establishing 18 new churches this year. The first 1993 team is scheduled for Feb. 8-25.

Each team will consist of five preachers and five "testifiers," all from Mississippi. Each volunteer will be paired with a Zimbabwean, and they will visit house-to-house each morning to share the plan of salvation and invite residents to evening services, according to Harrell.

The dates for the remaining trips are Mar. 15-Apr. 1; May 17-June 3; June 14-July 1; July 12-July 29; Sept. 13-20; and Oct. 11-28.

For more information on the volunteer trips and the Mississippi/Zimbabwe Partnership project, contact Bill Hardy in the Partnership Missions Office of MBCB at P.O. Box 530, Jackson, MS 39205-0530. Telephone: (601) 968-3800.



Youth Coed Missions Conference

"Youth Make a Difference" is the theme of the 1993 Youth Coed Missions Conference, scheduled for March 16-18 at Gulfshore Assembly on the Mississippi Gulf Coast. Mark Evans (left), a former youth minister who challenges students to break away from the crowd, will be the featured speaker, and Justin Fennell (right), best-selling comedian/musician who blends everyday funny situations with never-changing truth from the Word of God, will provide comedy and music. A special concert appearance will be made on the evening of March 16 by the Christian group, "4 Him". The conference is being sponsored by the Brotherhood and Woman's Missionary Union (WMU) departments of the Mississippi Baptist Convention Board. Cost is \$65 and includes two nights lodging, five meals, insurance, specially-designed T-shirt, and conference materials. For more information or to receive a registration form, contact WMU at P.O. Box 530, Jackson, MS 39205-0530. Telephone: (601) 968-3800.

BookLink ministry adds three collection points

MEMPHIS, Tenn. (BP) — The National Fellowship of Baptist Educators' BookLink ministry, which provides Christian reference and study books for Southern Baptist missionaries and national pastors, has added three more volunteers to its list of shipping directors.

The new volunteers are C.E. Holladay of Clinton, Miss.; John Dent of Walhalla, S.C.; and Olin Williams of Eubanks, Ky.

"We are asking those donating books to mail via Parcel Post or UPS to the shipping director nearest them, to even out the workload," said B. Hal Buchanan of Tupelo, Miss., who serves as the ministry's executive director.

Buchanan said more volunteers still are needed to help with col-

lection and shipment of materials. Anyone interested in volunteering or donating books for BookLink may call 1-800-645-4391.

The organization receives requests almost daily from missionaries overseas. The greatest needs are for reference works and study Bibles.

BookLink continues to be one of the National Fellowship of Baptists in Missions' most successful fellowship ministries, according to Bob Salley, NFBM director. The educators' fellowship is one of 14 under the Southern Baptist Brotherhood Commission's NFBM umbrella.

Since its inception four years ago, BookLink has shipped more than 64,525 books, tapes, tracts, and other items to five states and 52 countries.

Minnesota-Wisconsin chooses Texan Tinsley as new leader

ROCHESTER, Minn. (BP) — A Texas Baptist association's director of missions, William C. "Bill" Tinsley, has been elected as the new executive director of the Minnesota-Wisconsin Southern Baptist Convention.

Tinsley, Denton Association director of missions since 1986, will succeed Otha Womble, who will retire April 1 after nearly

18 years with the Minnesota-Wisconsin convention, which now encompasses some 13,850 members in 132 churches and chapels.

Tinsley received a unanimous vote from 23 members of the convention executive board at a Jan. 8 meeting at the state's Baptist headquarters in Rochester. He is scheduled to move to Rochester Feb. 4.

Notice to Lay Leaders

You are invited to attend the state-wide Evangelism Conference, Jan. 25-26 in Tupelo. Make sure your pastor is able to attend. This could set the tone for evangelism in Mississippi for all of the coming year. Outstanding music and inspired anointed preaching will be on the program. It will begin Monday at 1:30 p.m. at the West Jackson Street Church. — GH

Planners schedule workshops for BREAKTHROUGH project

By William H. Perkins Jr.

The Sunday School Department of the Mississippi Baptist Convention Board (MBCB) is planning a February series of Great Commission BREAKTHROUGH workshops to help Mississippi Sunday School workers and leaders define the program and develop activities that will lead to BREAKTHROUGH in their Sunday Schools.

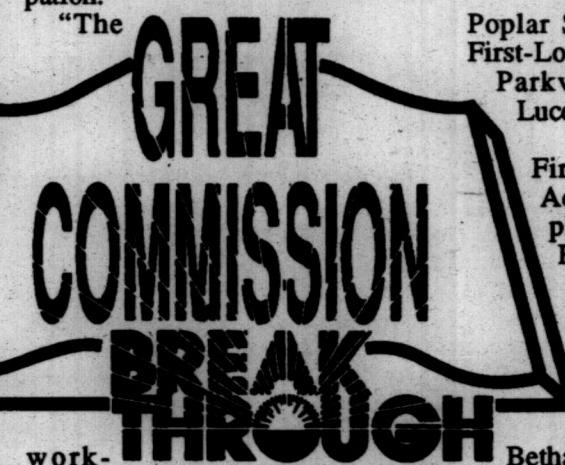
"The purpose of the workshops is to provide those who attend with enough information to not only allow a definition of the program to be formed for their church, but also to allow them to discover some needs that exist in their church. We will then guide them to formulate actions that will move their church toward BREAKTHROUGH as they define it at the workshop," said Randy Tompkins, consultant in the Sunday School Department of MBCB.

Keith Wilkinson, director of the Sunday School Department, announced that there is no registration fee for the workshops, and no requirement to pre-register.

"However, in order to have enough tables and chairs at the workshops, we would appreciate pastors, ministers of education, or Sunday School directors letting us know as soon as possible if they are planning to attend one of the workshops," he requested.

Wilkinson believes that churches

who attend the workshops will be taking advantage of a program whose specially-tailored format will fit neatly into their plans for increasing Sunday School participation.



workshop materials — especially designed for Great Commission BREAKTHROUGH — will be dispensed at no charge. We hope Sunday School workers from all age groups, as well as pastors, church staff, and Sunday School general officers, will participate in these workshops," he said.

Workshop time for Monday, Tuesday, and Thursday sessions is 7-9 p.m. Workshop time for Wednesday sessions is 10 a.m.-12 noon. No meals or child care will be provided.

Workshop dates and church sites are:

Monday, Feb. 1
First-Ripley, First-Corinth, Clarksdale-Clarksdale, First-Holly

Springs, Hernando-Hernando.

Tuesday, Feb. 2
First-New Albany, First-Tupelo, First-Cleveland, First-Batesville, North Oxford-Oxford.

Monday, Feb. 8
Poplar Springs Drive-Meridian, First-Louisville, First-Kosciusko, Parkview-Greenville, First-Lucedale.

Tuesday, Feb. 9
First-Quitman, Ackerman-Ackerman, Grace-Philadelphia, First-Greenwood, First-Pascagoula.

Wednesday, Feb. 10
Highland-Laurel, Faith-Starkville, First-Carthage, First-Grenada, First-Gulfport.

Thursday, Feb. 11
Bethany-Bay Springs, Caanan-Columbus, Forest-Forest, First-Houston, First-Picayune.

Monday, Feb. 15
First-Magee, First-McComb.

Tuesday, Feb. 16
First-Crystal Springs, Collins-Collins, Woodville-Woodville, First-Columbia, First-Brookhaven.

Wednesday, Feb. 17
Immanuel-Hattiesburg, Park Place-Brandon, Hinds/Madison Associational Office-Jackson.

For more information on the Great Commission BREAKTHROUGH program, contact the Sunday School Department, MBCB, at P.O. Box 530, Jackson, MS 39205-0530. Telephone: (601) 968-3800.

HMB's Blackaby: America's future depends more on prayer than Clinton

By Tammi Ledbetter

INDIANAPOLIS (BP) — Beyond many Southern Baptists' qualms about Bill Clinton's views on abortion and homosexual rights, another issue will be far more crucial to America's well-being, a Southern Baptist home missions leader said.

It's the prayer life of Southern Baptists and fellow evangelicals.

Henry Blackaby, Home Mission Board spiritual awakening director, said the affiliation of the president-elect and Vice President-elect Al Gore with Southern Baptist churches will keep the eyes of America on the denomination.

"I am convinced," Blackaby said, "that America is about to see clearly and unmistakably the prayer life of Southern Baptists and evangelicals more than the integrity of the recently elected politicians."

Home missions also will take on a more urgent role in America's future, said Blackaby, who has voiced his concerns in a number of settings since Clinton's election.

Reviewing the campaign's political rhetoric, Blackaby said no one came close "to giving answers to any of the problems we are facing as a nation."

"Our nation without question is morally bankrupt and we're in an absolute spiritual emergency. Nothing short of a mighty, mighty sweeping of the breath of God in revival will ever turn our nation around."

Blackaby reminded Southern Baptists and other evangelicals bemoaning the election results that "the God we serve is the God of history. He is not a God outside of history. He is the one who is shaping history."

He said Christians get too caught up in a political focus, thinking God is merely a passive observer. "From Scripture, let me assure you, he is not! He has always been the one orchestrating history, from the beginning right up to our day."

By rediscovering a sense of accountability to God, Blackaby said, Baptists can become intercessors in the context of present-day history. As God reveals his plan for America, Blackaby asked, "Could he trust you in his presence with what he is about to do? Do you already have a base of confident expectation in what you pray? Or have you been reacting and responding 'politically' rather than

as a child of God in kingdom activity?"

Blackaby urged Christians to pray "with a sense of mission and expectation that what we do next in the most holy place in prayer will make a bigger difference in America and my world than all the politicians elected to office." He added that "one person God has access to could make a bigger difference in America through intercession than any other factor."

"Prayer is not merely a spiritual discipline," Blackaby insisted. "It is a crucial necessity for the shaping of our future. If we will not pray, America will not survive."

Blackaby insisted Southern Baptists "can have any president we're willing to pray him to become."

He said he draws encouragement from knowing that Clinton called his pastor, Rex Horne of Immanuel Church in Little Rock, Ark., following the election to request prayer. "He put everybody out of the room and for the next 35 minutes they went before God on their faces in intercession and prayer."

Ledbetter is INDIANA BAPTIST managing editor.

RTVC trustees hear of expansion, stability

FORT WORTH, Texas (BP) — Radio and Television Commission trustees, in their Jan. 11-12 meeting in Fort Worth, heard reports of greatly expanded audiences for its two television networks, accepted a "clean" auditors' opinion and learned of significant technical advancements in communications.

Jack Johnson, RTVC president, reported on a recent trip to the former Soviet Union to explore ways to capitalize on the agency's opportunity to air programming in the Russian republic. He reported on discussions with Foreign Mission Board personnel concerning a plan to reach people who respond to the two hours of weekly RTVC programming aired in St. Petersburg (formerly Leningrad). Johnson added, "I met with Bella Kurkova," newly appointed head of the Russian television agency, "and we came to a meeting of the minds." Johnson predicted the meetings would assure continued free airing of Baptist programs on the govern-

ment-controlled station.

Johnson also reported progress on an effort to air RTVC-produced radio programs in Russia.

Network operations vice president Michael Wright told trustees that FamilyNet and ACTS, RTVC's two television networks, now reach into 60.6 million homes across the United States with potential viewership of 163.8 million people. He said ACTS is now on 1,194 cable systems with more than 19 million households, and FamilyNet is carried by 64 low-power and 54 full-power TV stations covering 41.6 million homes.

Bill Airy, president of VGI, the corporation which handles transmission and sales for the Faith and Values Channel, announced impending expansion into 800,000 to 1 million subscriber homes in Boston; Fairfield County, Conn.; Chicago; Cleveland; and the New York boroughs of Bronx, Brooklyn, and Long Island after successful negotiations with Cablevision Systems.

SBTS search narrowed to 4 people, say trustees

MEMPHIS, Tenn. (BP) — Southern Seminary's presidential search committee has narrowed its list of potential nominees to four.

Wayne Allen, chairman of the Louisville, Ky., seminary's trustees, said the names are not being released at the request of the four individuals.

Allen, in a telephone interview with Baptist Press, said the seven-member search committee met Jan. 11-12 in Memphis and settled on four potential nominees as suc-

cessor to Roy L. Honeycutt. President of the seminary since 1982, the 66-year-old Honeycutt announced last October his retirement at the end of 1993.

The committee will interview the four potential nominees in mid-February, Allen said, and select the person it will recommend to fellow trustees in early March.

After one further in-depth interview, the individual's name will be announced in April, Allen said.

Home Mission Board reports 1,200 church starts in 1992

ATLANTA (BP) — Preliminary statistics from the Home Mission Board show that 1,138 new congregations were formed last year, compared to 1,021 in 1991, an increase of approximately 12%.

As part of the Bold Mission Thrust goal to establish 50,000 churches by the year 2000, the Home Mission Board launched the 15,000 Campaign at the 1991 meeting of the Southern Baptist Convention.

President Larry Lewis calculated data at the start of the decade revealing the need for 1,500 church starts a year in order to meet the Bold Mission Thrust goal. The board hopes to increase church starts to 1,500 a year by 1995. Subsequent yearly increases will be necessary to meet the ultimate goal. Because of the increase, "we are right on target with our goal," says David Bunch, Home Mission Board vice president for strategy development.

Support was offered by the Home Mission Board to help Southern Baptists enter unreached counties, identify key churches for sponsorship and link churches

together to promote church starting. These strategies aided in the increase of church starts, says Bunch. However, the most important factor in starting churches, he says, is a heart with a burden for an unreached area.

In spite of the churches started last year, many areas remain unreached, says Bunch. Statistics show that 50% of Americans do not attend church. In multi-housing communities, an important focus area, 98% of residents do not attend church.

Likewise, nationwide 325 counties have no Southern Baptist churches. Of these counties, 137 have a population over 20,000.

Pioneer areas are not the only places that need church starts. Because pockets of unreached people exist in areas where Southern Baptists prevail, innovative churches are needed to reach people who have rejected existing congregations, Bunch says.

Because older congregations tend to plateau, says Bunch, "the crisis need is for new congregations. New congregations reach more people for Christ."

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Gulf Coast RAs and Brotherhood conduct rally

Approximately 90 men and boys attended a Man and Boy Missions Rally conducted by the Royal Ambassador and Brotherhood of the Gulf Coast Association. They participated in five "round robin" activities outdoors, then moved into the Christian Life Center to hear brief reports on lay renewal, medical/dental mis-

sions, language missions on the Coast, the Seamen and Truckers Ministry, and about the work of foreign missions in Guatemala by Charles Corey. John Carver is associational Brotherhood director, and Bobby Perry is director of missions.

HMB president thanks WMU for a job well-done

TALLADEGA, Ala. — Woman's Missionary Union received praise and thanks Jan. 12 for a job well-done on behalf of home missions.

Larry Lewis, Home Mission Board president, spoke to the WMU Executive Board during their Jan. 9-13 meeting at Shocco Springs Assembly.

"Let me acknowledge publicly and with as much appreciation as I possibly can that although the success of the Annie Armstrong Easter Offering (for Home Missions) is the work of many people across the country, no persons or no organization is more important to the offering than Woman's Missionary Union," Lewis said.

"We thank the Lord for what you do. On behalf of our missionaries, our staff, and our board of directors, thank you for all you have

done."

Lewis told the WMU board that books had closed on the 1992 Annie Armstrong Easter Offering, totaling \$37,545,461, a 5.7% increase over the previous year's offering total.

The offering makes up 47% of the HMB's annual budget, Lewis reminded the group. "This is the largest one sum of funding we have in home missions," he said.

"When I prepared this report (to give to the WMU board), I was not aware, of course, of the nature of the report of your long-range planning committee or the recommendations you adopted this past weekend," he said. "Yesterday I received the report, and I studied it carefully."

He read to the group the statement he had given to Baptist Press news service. He noted that he and

several members of the HMB staff present for the meeting had already had a private briefing with Carolyn Miller, national WMU president, and Dellanna O'Brien, national WMU executive director, earlier that morning.

In return, several WMU leaders expressed appreciation to Lewis for his openness and fairness. They thanked him for sharing the statement personally with them and for bringing a report that answered their concerns.

In his report, Lewis identified a few key trends he feels will particularly affect both WMU and the HMB — an increased emphasis on volunteers over career missionaries, more church-based ministry efforts rather than agency-based ministry efforts, and more ethnic diversity rather than Anglo dominance.

Oklahoma pastor's protest prompts cancellation of Graham's daughter

OKLAHOMA CITY (BP) — Billy Graham's daughter, Anne Graham Lotz, has been canceled from Oklahoma Baptists' annual evangelism conference after at least one pastor complained that a woman should not be in a potential preaching situation.

The cancellation reached the Jan. 13 front page of Oklahoma City's Daily Oklahoman in an article by religion writer Pat Gilliland and, at noon, Paul Harvey's national radio broadcast.

Wayne Keely, pastor of Faith Church in Claremore, Okla., told the newspaper in a telephone interview he had complained because Lotz was scheduled for two 45-minute messages during the Oklahoma Baptist General Convention's State Evangelism Conference Jan. 18-19 at First Southern Baptist Church in Del City.

Keely told the newspaper Lotz's appearance opens the door to a woman preaching, which he believes is against biblical teachings.

Keely could not be reached by Baptist Press for comment.

The pastor also confirmed to the newspaper that he interrupted Jill Briscoe, a popular evangelical women's speaker, during a Baptist youth evangelism conference Dec. 30 when Briscoe asked the audience to turn in their Bibles to selected passages and began to discuss them.

"I think it would have been a sin for me not to do something," Keely was quoted as saying.

Dec. 30, during the Oklahoma Baptists' Youth Evangelism Conference's morning session, also held at the Del City church, Keely interrupted Briscoe from

the audience. According to an account in the Baptist Messenger, Oklahoma Baptists' newsjournal, Keely stood, pointed his finger at her, announced she was out of authority and contrary to the Word of God, then walked out with his group of young people.

Slightly flustered, but keeping her composure, Briscoe, in an emotional voice, told the group she was invited by the Baptist General Convention of Oklahoma, speaking under its authority, under the authority of her husband, and the authority of God, the Baptist Messenger reported. Briscoe subsequently received two standing ovations in support of her statements.

Dave Parker and Dana Williamson contributed to this article.

capsules

CHINESE GOVERNMENT COUNTS 63 MILLION PROTESTANTS: NANJING, China (FMB) — China's official State Statistical Bureau has released a survey counting 63 million Protestant Christians in China, according to the *South China Morning Post*. The government previously had acknowledged only between 10 million and 12 million such believers. Despite uneven enforcement of religious freedom and reports of continued persecution in some areas, the number indicates phenomenal growth of the church during the communist era. Korean Christians doubled to 12.5 million in a six-year period ending in December 1991, according to the 1992 Yearbook of the Korean Church. Churches increased from 25,050 to 37,190. Once cut off from the outside world as part of the ancient "Hermit Kingdom," South Korea, with a population of 44 million, has become a powerhouse of Christianity in Asia.

BRITISH BAPTISTS AFFIRM PARKS, PLEDGE TO COOPERATE WITH CBF, FMB: RICHMOND, Va. (ABP) — British Baptist leaders have affirmed Keith Parks' decision to direct the Cooperative Baptist Fellowship's missions program as being "in the best interests of the work of Southern Baptist world missions." The leaders acknowledged "the visionary leadership" given by Parks, who resigned as president of the Foreign Mission Board at the end of October, citing in part philosophical disagreements with the board's trustees. In November, he accepted the Fellowship's offer to become its missions coordinator, a post he will assume Feb. 1. In a statement faxed to the Fellowship's Atlanta headquarters prior to Christmas, the British leaders also expressed their intent to work with both the Fellowship and the Foreign Mission Board and their hope that the mission agencies "will cooperate with each other."

FLORIDA PRODUCED DOCUMENTARY TO RECOUNT ANDREW MINISTRIES: JACKSONVILLE, Fla. (BP) — "When the Storms Passed By," a documentary about Southern Baptists' response to Hurricane Andrew in Florida and Louisiana, as well as Hurricane Iniki in Hawaii, will be shown on the ACTS/VISN and Family Net cable systems Jan. 30 at 10 p.m. Eastern Standard Time. The in-depth report presents the initial impact of the hurricane on the states and the ongoing ministry of Southern Baptist churches to local residents. The hour-long documentary includes a segment on the 500-plus construction volunteers from North Carolina who rebuilt homes in south Florida over the New Year's holiday and summarizes the continuing needs in Florida. The ACTS/VISN Network can be seen on 1,200 plus cable systems with a viewership of 20 million households. In Florida, the network is on 42 cable systems. Viewers should check local listings for cable channel numbers.

U.S. SHOULD LEAD EFFORT TO END ATROCITIES, LAND SAYS: WASHINGTON (BP) — The United States of America not only is justified in its military role to provide humanitarian aid in Somalia but has the responsibility to lead a multi-nation effort to halt atrocities in former Yugoslavia, Southern Baptist ethicist Richard Land said recently. Land, executive director of the Christian Life Commission, called for the United States' increased action in the face of Serbia's "ethnic cleansing" of Bosnians during two nationally telecast news programs during Christmas week and in a telephone interview. "I don't think the United States unilaterally has the right to intervene in Bosnia," Land said in an interview. "I do say that the United States has a responsibility to use its leadership to try to put together a multi-national coalition that would intervene to stop the gross, grotesque violation of human rights taking place in Bosnia." The "tragic fact is that if we don't take the lead, it simply won't be done," Land said.

FMB SEARCH COMMITTEE REPORTEDLY TAPS NOMINEE: TALLADEGA, Ala. (BP) — The search committee for a new president of the Foreign Mission Board has selected a nominee but has agreed not to disclose the individual's name, according to the FMB trustee chairman, who made the statement in a public meeting Jan. 11. The committee plans to present the nominee's name to fellow trustees during their Feb. 8-10 meeting in Richmond or April 19-21 meeting in Columbus, Ohio, Jackson said. The committee agreed to secrecy concerning the nominee, not even to tell their spouses, said Jackson, pastor of First Church, Fairfield, Calif. Jackson was out of the city Jan. 12 and unavailable for further comment.

CLINTON WORSHIPS AT HISTORIC CHURCH EN ROUTE TO INAUGURATION: RICHMOND, Va. (ABP) — Culpeper Church in Culpeper, Va., has seen a lot in its 219 years but nothing like the excitement it expected Sunday, Jan. 17, when President-elect Bill Clinton, Vice President-elect Al Gore, and hundreds of aides and reporters planned to visit the 11 a.m. service. Clinton and Gore and their wives worshiped at the church, about 70 miles from Washington, on their bus trip from Charlottesville, Va., to the capital for Jan. 20 inauguration ceremonies. The trip was a re-creation of Thomas Jefferson's journey by horseback from Monticello, his home near Charlottesville, to Washington for his own inauguration in 1801.

FMB leaders affirm to WMU the need for bridge-building

By Karen Benson

TALLADEGA, Ala. (BP) — During several sessions with the national Executive Board of Woman's Missionary Union Jan. 11, Foreign Mission Board trustees and administrators called for bridge-building efforts on the part of Southern Baptists.

During a morning session, FMB trustee chairman John Jackson and trustees Karen Gilbert, Phyllis Randall, and Bill Blanchard brought greetings to the WMU leaders. The invitation to the trustees to join the WMU board meeting resulted from earlier dialogues with WMU leaders. WMU leaders have been invited, in turn, to the FMB trustee meeting in February in Richmond.

Jackson told the board he wants to see a continuation and a strengthening of the WMU-FMB relationship — not a deterioration.

Although that relationship has been "damaged some," he said, "just because it has been damaged doesn't mean you should keep jabbing the wound. Our desire is to heal any damaged relationships and to heal the wounds.

"We trust that as we look forward... that five years from now we will look back and say that had we not joined together in a cooperative

spirit, we would be very far apart. I think there are great things ahead."

During an afternoon FMB report, Don Kammerdiener, interim FMB president, asserted Southern Baptists are at a critical juncture and stand in need of a "new bridge for a new era" to span the centuries.

"We stand in need of a bridge firmly anchored in the past and firmly anchored in the future," he said. "We must make certain that the place of anchorage is secure.... Missions is the foundation of the bridge."

He offered four suggestions for Southern Baptists' missions bridges to be pointed in the right direction:

1) A "fruitful encounter with Islam." Most of Christianity's advances, Kammerdiener said, have come from among primitive peoples, not from among the great religious systems of the world.

2) Southern Baptists must finish the job of "nationalization of institutions we have established around the world," Kammerdiener said.

"There is something about us that feels good when we say we support this hospital, or that seminary, or some institution." But there comes a time when Southern Baptists need to relinquish control of these

institutions to the national Christians, he asserted.

3) Bridges must also point in the direction of an "appropriate focus on the former Marxist countries," Kammerdiener said.

For example, there are at least 250,000 Baptists or Christians in the republics of the former Soviet Union, he said. "And they have been there for 60 and 70 years. They not only have survived, but have triumphed during the most difficult trials of their lives. Those of us who have not learned how to resist the negative and evil influences... of our culture won't do anything of long-lasting value unless we go first to them as learners."

4) Southern Baptists need bridges pointing "toward a reaffirmation that our mandate is to the whole world," Kammerdiener said.

"I think the Foreign Mission Board will find the mind of Christ if we reaffirm the mandate to the whole world," he said. That world encompasses areas ready for "harvesting" the gospel, areas considered "traditional" Christian or evangelized areas and areas of the world where people have never heard the gospel.

Benson writes for WMU.

Spouse's Day: January 24

Exposing the marriage myths

(ZPS) — On a bitter cold December night in 1971 Lynne Barry did what no girl had done to me before. She blasted the foundation right out from under me. Months earlier we had decided to get married. We had set the date, reserved the church, and begun attending to the myriad of details that go into planning a wedding. Then out of the blue, while we sat in my car in her parents' driveway, she dropped the bomb: "I don't have the peace of God regarding our marriage. I think we need to break up and part ways." She stepped out of my car—and out of my life.

After that broken engagement, I had to put my life back together, which involved refocusing my confidence in my relationship with Jesus Christ. God offers his promises of joy and peace and satisfaction to anyone—married or unmarried—who has a relationship with him. From a biblical standpoint, those words cannot be denied. But how many single people really, deep down inside, believe them? Observation indicates that very few people actually consider singleness as an acceptable option, let alone an example of abundant living.

Unfortunately there are several wrong reasons to marry. At least four of these are often touted as inevitable benefits of marriage; in reality, they are nothing more than myths:

I. Marriage will end my loneliness.

II. Marriage will heal my brokenness.

III. Marriage will ensure my happiness.

IV. Marriage is God's plan for everyone.

A year and a half after that cold night in 1971, Lynne and I got back together. A year after that we were married, with the clear and mutual understanding that nothing

would ever be more important to either of us than our relationship with Jesus Christ. Though focusing our attention on him did not resolve all our differences or solve all our relational problems, it did give us a firm foundation upon which to build a marriage.

Taken from *Fit to Be Tied* by Bill & Lynne Hybels (Zondervan Publishing House, 1991).

Devotional...

A leak in the roof

By Beth Moore

Lord, make me a leak in the roof. As the world builds roofs of tar and tile to shelter themselves from rain, so have they built roofs of hatred and prejudice to shelter themselves from the brotherly love you intended for them. As a leak lets in just a few drops of rain until little by little the tiles rot and the water pours in, so let me be the leak through which your love leaks in until little by little the world is showered by your love.

Lord, make me a crack in the window. As the world has built windows of glass to keep out the wind, so have they built windows of ignorance to convince themselves they can be completely self-sufficient. As the wind creeps in through a small crack until little by little the crack grows and the window shatters, so let the knowledge of man's need for you in their lives creep in through me until the window of ignorance shatters and your truth blows in on the winds of love.

Lord, make me a hole in the dam. As the world has built dams of concrete and steel to hold back mighty rivers, so have they built dams of indifference to hold back the Holy Spirit. As a hole in the dam lets the water through and weakens the entire structure until the walls crumble, let me be the hole through which your Spirit flows and weakens the dam of indifference until the wall crumbles and your Holy Spirit floods the world.

The world built roofs of hatred, windows of ignorance, and dams of indifference. Use me, Lord, to rot the tiles, shatter the glass, and crumble the walls until the whole world loves one another, longs to know more about you, and drowns itself in the Holy Spirit. Amen.

Moore lives in Carrollton.

Letters to the editor

Another bigotry

Editor:

The more I read the Baptist Record, the more disillusioned I become with the so-called "Christianity" of Southern Baptists. Before we cast stones, let's consider the familiar Bible story of the woman at the well. Jesus reminded us there is not one without sin. Yet Mr. Windham's letter (Baptist Record, Dec. 31, 1992) alluded to the fact that the President-elect's church is considering his expulsion. Then we read where a Christ-

ian group plans to protest as well as pray during the inauguration. These people actually had the nerve to challenge Clinton not to be sworn in on the Bible. My, my, my — what a "holier-than-thou" attitude. Where were these people when Nancy and Ronnie were using astrology to run the country? The Bible is very clear about soothsayers. How do these groups dare let the lies of George Bush go unpunished concerning Iran-Contra? We all know what the Good Book says: Liars will have no part in heaven.

I suppose if President-elect Clinton were expelled as a Southern Baptist, then all of us Southern Baptists who voted for him should be expelled. Then the church becomes a dictator, not unlike Hitler, that controls your thought processes.

I am disgusted that a Laurel minister would suggest we not refer to Bill Clinton and Al Gore as fellow Southern Baptists. This is just what we need in Mississippi — another form of bigotry.

Shelly & Mary Ellen Fontz
Pascagoula

Don't press to forgive

Editor:

In your Oct. 22, 1992 issue of the Baptist Record, you ran a story called "There is life after rape." The story was about Ron Herrod's 16-year-old daughter, Twila, who was raped, became pregnant, had the baby, and placed it for adoption. Later the Herrods and the adoptive parents became friends.

While I definitely applaud the fact that this family was able to become survivors of one of the most violent crimes in our lifetime, as a staff member of a rape crisis program for several years, I have worked with hundreds of rape victims, both adults and children.

I have seen many victims who struggle with the issue of forgiveness, especially when they have a strong religious faith. Herrod stated "we managed to achieve some victory over the anger and other feelings within a few weeks, in truth they still crop up from time to time, but we see that as disobedience to God and we have to overcome it." I know Herrod was speaking of his own family in making this statement, and their beliefs, but as an advocate for sexual assault victims, I can see where a survivor, who has chosen not to forgive their perpetrator, could read this article and begin to feel very guilty because they, too, have not "managed that victory."

Forgiveness is a complex issue, both psychologically and spiritually, for survivors of sexual abuse. I believe it is an option that must be left up to each individual. Many survivors have been taught that forgiveness is a Christian virtue. Many survivors find themselves at different levels of forgiveness. Many feel it is necessary for their own healing, but many do not feel

it is necessary for their recovery. I believe we should, in no way, pressure or force the concept of forgiveness in a case of sexual abuse. I feel it is not the survivors' job to forgive the perpetrator if they don't desire to do so. If they feel they would rather hand that over to our Father, who is a much stricter judge than we'll ever be, then we, as supportive advocates, should respect forgiveness as their individual choice.

June M. Renfrow
Hattiesburg

Thanks from seminary

Editor:

Thank you Mississippi Baptists for your \$155,293 in gifts to Golden Gate Baptist Theological Seminary through the Cooperative Program unified budget during the 1991-92 SBC-year (Oct. 1, 1991 to Sept. 31, 1992).

Your prayers and support helped undergird a solid year of ministry and growth for Southern Baptists' seminary in the West. Student enrollment was up, we enjoyed our second consecutive year of a balanced budget, faculty and staff morale and commitment remained high, and our students continued their involvement in a multitude of cross-cultural ministries at our three campuses and various Ethnic Leadership Development Centers.

Together, we look to a future filled with unprecedented opportunity around the world. Golden Gate Seminary pledges to continue its commitment to educating a new and creative generation of Christian leaders to help Mississippi Baptists meet those challenges and reach the world for Christ.

William O. Crews, president
Golden Gate Seminary
Mill Valley, Calif.

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1993 Mississippi Baptist Evangelism Conference January 25-26 West Jackson Street Baptist Church Tupelo, Miss.

J. Garland McKee, convenor

"Ye shall be witnesses unto Me" (Acts 1:8) ...Jesus

Schedule

Monday

1:30 p.m.
Ed Young
Danny Lanier
Bailey Stone

6:30 p.m.
W.A. Jones Jr.
Tim Lee
Bo Baker

Tuesday

9:00 a.m.
Bailey Stone
Jack Smith
P.J. Scott

1:30 p.m.
Bill Duncan
Paul Powell
Bo Baker

6:30 p.m.

W.A. Jones Jr.
Tim Lee
Bo Baker

"Don't miss it even if you can."

Music
Dick Baker
Bill Hanson
Vernard Johnson
June McKee



Bo Baker



Dick Baker



Bill Duncan



Bill Hanson



Vernard Johnson



W.A. Jones Jr.



Danny Lanier



Tim Lee



J. Garland McKee



June McKee



Paul Powell



P.J. Scott



Jack Smith



Bailey Stone



Ed Young

"Helping to Bring Mississippi and the World to Jesus."

Thursday, January 21, 1993

Names in the News

BOLIVAR, Mo. (BP) — Roy Blunt, who has finished eight years as Missouri secretary of state, has assumed the presidency of Missouri Baptists' largest college, Southwest Baptist University in Bolivar. Blunt, an SBU trustee since 1985, was unanimously elected as SBU's 23rd president by trustees in a special meeting Dec. 30 and given a three-year contract.



Harold W. Lollar Sr., 66, died Nov. 4 at Rush Hospital in Meridian. He was pastor of Pine Forest Church in Collinsville for 22 years.

M.J. Harden, 72, of Meridian, died Jan. 4. Services led by Pastor James Ruffin, Bill Causey, Gene Murray, and Jack Stack, were conducted at Poplar Springs Drive Church in Meridian. Harden served as minister of education in Theodore, Ala. and in Meridian, and was active in the Tombigbee Hospice Program.

Michael Tew was licensed to the ministry at Everett Church, Mendenhall. He plans to attend

William Carey College. Tew is available for supply, youth revivals, and retreats, and can be reached at 847-0154.

Hubert Greer, singing evangelist, has completed more than 15 years in this ministry. Known for using the "ole time favorites" in revivals, Greer has served in 218 churches and 348 revivals. He continues to be involved in revivals, concerts, and crusades. He can be contacted at Rt. 4, Box 15, Wesson, MS 39191 or 601-643-2002.

Lois Whaley, 71, a retired missionary who worked in Japan for 41 years died of cancer Jan. 9. Whaley, who was appointed a missionary in 1948, and her husband, Charles, were among the first Southern Baptist missionaries to enter Japan after World War II. Following retirement from career missionary work in 1989, she and her husband returned to Japan in 1990 as International Service Corps workers. Besides her husband, she is survived by one daughter.

Adult Sunday School teaching helps available through SBCNet

NASHVILLE — Adult Sunday School teachers interested in making their lessons more contemporary and relevant can find help from a new feature on SBCNet, the Southern Baptist data communications network.

"Adult Life and Work: EXTRA!" offers supplemental current event teaching suggestions for teachers using the Life and Work curriculum. The online computer feature draws ideas from contemporary statistics, news stories, music, and other media. It is a companion program to "Youth Life and Work: EXTRA!" which is already online.

"The program is designed to help motivate adult Sunday School class members by making Bible study more relevant to their everyday lives. It should really help with lesson application," said Dan Phillips, media design editor in the Baptist Sunday School Board's church growth-Sunday School division.

Phillips said the first posting of "Adult Life and Work: EXTRA!"

is Thursday, January 14. Teaching suggestions included in that posting are for the Jan. 24 Sunday School lesson. The program will be updated weekly with each set of teaching suggestions appearing on-line 10 days before the date of the related lesson, Phillips said.

SBCNet — a private forum on the CompuServe computer network — can be accessed by any computer modem with the assistance of a special kit available through the Sunday School Board's Customer Service Center. SBCNet subscribers also can access Baptist Press news stories, Facts and Trends Information Service, prayer requests from the Foreign and Home Mission Boards, teaching tips for youth discipleship training groups, and many other features.

For more information about "Adult Life and Work: EXTRA!" contact Phillips at (615) 251-3878. Those interested in learning more about SBCNet should call David Haywood at (615) 251-2895.



Todd Stewart, right, son of Mr. and Mrs. Kenneth Stewart of Gillsburg, was licensed to the ministry by Gillsburg Church, Oskyka, on Dec. 20. Paul Pearson is the pastor of Gillsburg Church.

Staff Changes

Millard Mackey is now pastor of Gatesville Church in Copiah County. He and his family united with the church on Jan. 10. He was formally a member of First Church, Crystal Springs.

Harold Shirley recently accepted a call to a new congregation, Oakland Church in Rock Hill, S.C. Shirley is a native of Meridian and was ordained by the Highland Church in Meridian. He was pastor of First Church, Yazoo City, 1956-1960.

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Former WMU leaders affirm changes made by Executive Board

By Karen Benson

TALLADEGA, Ala. (BP) — Five of six living national leaders of Woman's Missionary Union offered immediate affirmation Jan. 10 of decisions made earlier that evening by the current WMU Executive Board.

Present during the historic meeting were the two living former national executive directors, Alma Hunt and Carolyn Weatherford Crumpler, and the four living former national WMU presidents, Helen Fling, Christine Gregory, Dorothy Sample, and Marjorie McCullough. Sample was notified of a death in her family Sunday morning and left the meeting early.

Bill and Gerry Colston will be on leave of absence from the Foreign Mission Board beginning February until December, 1993, in order for Gerry to complete her studies at Mississippi State. They have served in Seoul, Korea, since 1968. Bill will be available for interim and supply work and can be contacted at 704 Ponderosa Drive, Starkville, MS 39759 (address until Feb. 28) or call 323-4216.

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Ken and Martha Cooper were forced to leave Ankara, Turkey, by the Turkish police. He is pastor of the Ankara Baptist Church International. The Coopers flew to Cypress to await information and perhaps permission to return to Ankara.

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It was evident that "nothing but the Holy Spirit" was at work during the meeting, said Hunt. "I know that nothing but the Holy Spirit could have enabled the people in that room to share that vision for the future and to exhibit so little fear or concern for their own selves."

"I felt the strength of commitment of today's leadership," Hunt said. "They were so courageous. I think WMU expanded our view of missions and opportunities to support missions. I shared in the feeling of excitement during the

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discussion as leaders today faced up to the opportunities and responsibilities incumbent upon us in these times.

"I am convinced that God will never forsake us as long as we stick to our purpose — which we have affirmed," Hunt said.

Fling agreed: "It has been fun for me to watch the women — to see them in action, to see the new thinking with the same kind of commitment to missions that there has always been."

When it comes to the "how-to questions" of how the recommendations will be fleshed out, Fling said she isn't worried.

"I have a great recognition of the creativity of the Holy Spirit, and I have a great appreciation of the creativity of women. I believe there is no reason to be fearful."

"We'll find new opportunities and new excitement in our future, because God did lead in our organization. He is in charge," Fling said.

The decisions made at this meeting continue almost 105 years of "working toward this inclusiveness — to broadening the tent," said Crumpler.

It was meaningful and significant to her, Crumpler said, that the current leadership wanted the former national leaders present for the meeting. "There has been such an orderly transition of leadership in WMU through the years that is really a unique thing — something you don't find at other agencies," she said.

Benson writes for WMU.

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CHURCH

From page 2

ship. They are using drama, contemporary music, and multi-media presentations. They offer multiple services on Sunday morning, and many offer Saturday evening worship.

In the 1950s, evangelism was done primarily on a mass (revivals and crusades) level. In the 1990s, however, effective evangelism is more relational and personal.

Everywhere I go, I hear pastors talking about the need for radical changes in the way we do church in the 1990s. They know that the old ways are not working well any more, so they are seeking new methods for doing ministry. My hope and prayer is that this attitude will grow and flourish.

I feel a great burden for the American church. I fear that if we don't change fast, we'll become

Noxubee Association revival results in black mission church

The Evangelism Committee of the Noxubee Association recently set a goal to bring revival to the black community there, to see lost souls come to know the Lord, and to establish a minority Southern Baptist mission church.

Noxubee County's population is 28% white, 72% black. Of the 28% who are white, approximately 25% are Mennonites. To reach the majority of the county presents a wonderful opportunity for Southern Baptists.

Evangelist/pastor Willie Scott of Marietta, Ga., was brought in for the revival.

A number of barriers had to be overcome, including the need for funds to be raised in an association with only 11 Baptist church-

es; only four of those have full time pastors. Ray Grisett, Richard Brogan, and the Cooperative Missions Department of the Mississippi Baptist Convention Board offered valuable assistance and support.

The revival began Sunday, Dec. 6. Forty-seven decisions for Christ were reported; a core of that group are now involved in starting a black Southern Baptist mission.

The Noxubee Association Evangelism Committee has turned the project over to the Missions Development Committee.

Willie Scott is training the core group of members of the mission and serving part time as pastor.

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Just for the Record

The National Association of Southern Baptist Secretaries will meet at Ridgecrest Conference Center, in Ridgecrest, N.C. The dates are April 28-May 1. For more information, contact Becky Brown, P.O. Box 457, Branson, MO 65616.

Bethany Church, Slate Springs, exceeded its \$6,000 Lottie Moon Christmas Offering for foreign missions goal with a total offering of \$7,440. Bethany Church averaged 89 in Sunday School last year. Henry Hight is pastor.

Bethel Church, Monticello, will have dedication for its education building at the 10:30 a.m. worship service on Jan. 24. The guest speaker will be Bill Causey, executive director-treasurer of the Mississippi Baptist Convention Board. Others on program include Archie Herrin, director of missions for Lawrence Association. Paul E. Smith is pastor.

Central Church, Golden, has surpassed its goal of \$6,200 for the Lottie Moon Foreign Mission Offering. A total of \$8,295.84 has been received. Ralph Culp is pastor.

Right to Life of Jackson will commemorate the 20th anniversary of the U.S. Supreme Court decision that legalized abortion with a candlelight memorial service, Jan. 22, 7 p.m., on the steps of the capitol. The participants will gather to memorialize the 30 million babies killed by abortion. For more information call 981-8181.

Luther Rice Alumni Luncheon will be held at East Heights Church, Tupelo, on Jan. 26. The cost is \$7. Call East Heights Church, 842-4947, to make reservations.

Clinton meets with ministers; nation's moral issues discussed

By Tom Strode

WASHINGTON (BP) — Fifteen ministers, most of whom were Southern Baptists, met with President-elect Bill Clinton eight days before his inauguration at a luncheon which included a "forthright exchange" on moral issues, one participant said later.

The two-hour meeting Jan. 12 at the Governor's Mansion in Little Rock was organized by Clinton's pastor, Rex Horne of Immanuel Church in Little Rock.

Among the 11 Southern Baptist participants were Adrian Rogers, a former Southern Baptist Convention president. Others who attended included popular author and preacher Chuck Swindoll and super-church pastor Bill Hybels.

In initiating the meeting, Horne said he had "no agenda, no motive other than to have (Clinton) meet some of these people and have some of them meet him." Some of the participants, however, openly expressed their disagreement with Clinton on some of his positions.

Abortion and homosexual rights, Merrell said, were "probably the two big-ticket items" but tax exemptions, the family and the necessity for spiritual guidance and direction also were discussed.

It also was to "let him know these folks out here were going to

be praying for him," Horne said.

Southern Baptist participants included some who have been identified with the conservative resurgence in the convention and some who have not. In addition to Horne, Rogers, pastor of Bellevue Church in suburban Memphis, and Merrell, the Southern Baptists attending were Ron Lewis, pastor of Richardson Heights Church in Richardson, Tex.; James Pleitz, pastor of Park Cities Church in Dallas; Roger Freeman, pastor of First Church in New Orleans; Wendell Estep, pastor of First Church in Columbia, S.C.; Randel Everett, pastor of First Church in Pensacola, Fla.; Ken Branam, pastor of Plymouth Park Church in Irving, Tex.; Stan Paris, pastor of First Church in Hope, Ark. (Clinton's childhood home); and David Napier, associate pastor at Immanuel.

Others attending were Max Lucado, author and pastor of a Church of Christ congregation in San Antonio; Ed Matthews, pastor of First United Methodist Church in Little Rock; Hybels and Swindoll. Hillary and Chelsea Clinton are members of First Methodist.

Hybels is pastor of the innovative Willow Creek Community Church in suburban Chicago. Swindoll is pastor of First Evan-

gelical Free Church in Fullerton, Calif.

Strode is director, media and news information, Washington office, CLC.

First, New Albany, celebrates 150 years

First Church, New Albany, began the celebration of its 150th anniversary Jan. 17.

J.R. Davis, former pastor from 1944-54, was in attendance. He is now retired, living in Meridian.

Throughout the next ten months, several events have been planned to commemorate the sesquicentennial. In addition to Davis, the following former pastors have also been invited: J. William Harbin, March 21; Pete Evans, May 30; Jim Bain, Aug. 8. Former music directors have also been invited to participate in worship services: Roy Blackman, Feb. 14; Bob Gray, May 2.

Other events include a concert by the gospel group Gold City on March 18, and a dinner on the grounds, May 30.

A history of the church is being written, and will be presented in the form of a drama, Oct. 2.

Revival Dates

Center Terrace Church, Canton: Jan. 24-27; Sunday, 9:30 a.m. and 6 p.m.; Mon.-Wed., 6:45 p.m.; Sunday School Revival; Leon Kilbreth, known as Mr. Sunday School, evangelist; Bobby Hood, music; Jerry T. Hood, pastor.

First, Lambert: Jan. 31-Feb. 3; 7 p.m.; Clyde K. Schiele, McCauley Church, Grenada, evangelist; Stephen J. Huber, pastor.

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The wisdom of the cross



By Chuck Pourciau
1 Corinthians 1:18-31

Incredible news often is met with skepticism. How many times have we heard someone who just won something valuable say, "I can't believe it?" The fact that the death, burial, and resurrection of a man named Jesus almost two thousand years ago can bring eternal life to people of today is incredible news. Some may say that it is too good to be true. Yet even in the first century there were those who felt that the message of the cross was foolishness. Yet to those of "us who are being saved it is the power of God." What can we learn from this passage concerning this power of God that brings salvation?

The gospel of the cross can seem unbelievable until one puts his faith in God (vv. 18-21). Paul was pointing out that the cross really is incredible news. That the way to God would be through a man who had died on a cross would cause anyone in the first century to be skeptical. Yet to those who are being saved the cross is the power of God. What is the difference? FAITH. No one can ever fully understand the gospel until he has put his faith in the Lord Jesus Christ. God's ways are not man's ways. So those who attempt to get the gospel all figured out before accepting the Lord will never get it figured out and will never know the Lord.

The gospel can be either a stumbling block or a means of salvation to anyone (vv. 22-25). Paul pointed out that it was equally difficult for both Jews and Greeks to accept the gospel. Jews demand signs, something to see before they will put their faith in Christ. Greeks seek wisdom, something they can think through. But as Raymond Bryan Brown wrote in the Broadman Commentary on I Corinthians, "God does not submit himself to men; men must submit themselves to God, in faith." One's social or religious background does not make the gospel any less incredible. He still must take that step of faith. Like some Jews of Paul's day, many are waiting for a sign before they trust God. The danger is that they will still be waiting for that sign in hell.

Spiritual wealth is not dependent on earthly wealth (vv. 26-29). Paul pointed out that most of the believers in the Corinthian church were not the socially elite. God's offer of spiritual wealth is extended to all and all must come into those riches through Jesus Christ. God's hand is extended to anyone at any time. The past is not a factor. Only faith is.

It is also clear from these verses that spiritual success is not dependent on social or business success. God can perform great things through any life that is yielded to him. A yielded life must be the primary qualification when we are seeking to fill positions of leadership in the church. Yet too often we are more impressed by one's accomplishments in the business world than we are by his accomplishments in the spiritual world.

The gift of redemption must lead to Christian commitment (vv. 30-31). It is God who is responsible for our salvation. It is God who gives us the strength to face each day. Therefore, we should be boasting in God. The Corinthians had factions in the church and they boasted concerning their factions (vv. 10-17). Therefore, Paul pointed out who was responsible for their salvation and every other good thing in their lives. They should not boast in a faction, but in God.

Our greatest pride should not be in worldly accomplishments but in God. He has given us our most valuable possession, so our lives should be a manifestation of pride in him. If our gratitude to God does not lead to Christian commitment, do we have anything to be grateful for?

I witnessed to a man who was a good man and a good friend. He never has been able to accept Christ, because he just cannot believe that the gospel is actually true. He wishes he could believe it, but he just can't. For him the gospel is foolishness.

It is impossible for man to understand the gospel. Salvation comes not when we have an intellectual grasp of all the elements of the gospel. Salvation comes when we put our trust in the only one who does understand it.

Pourciau is pastor, First Church, Louisville.

Bible Book

The Lord of life



By Guy A. Hughes
Psalms 36, 100, 127

Thinking of the fullness and duration of this wonderful life, W.B. Hinson, a great preacher of a past generation, spoke from his own experience, just before he died. He said, "I remember a year ago when the doctor told me, 'You have an illness from which you won't recover.' I walked out to where I live, five miles from Portland, Oregon, and I looked at the river in which I rejoice, and I looked at the stately trees that are always God's own poetry to my soul. Then in the evening I looked up into the great sky where God was lighting his lamps, and I said, 'I may not see you many more times, but Mountain, I shall be alive when you are gone; and River, I shall be alive when you cease running toward the sea; and Stars, I shall be alive when you have fallen from your sockets in the great down-pulling of the material universe!'"

This is the confidence all believers have when they put their trust in the Lord of Life.

The abundant blessing of God (Psalm 36:5-12) There are more positive things to reflect on than the filth and foolishness of those who delight in sin. We, who are saved, take great delight in living because God's love came to us that we might have life and have it abundantly (John 10:10). God's love for us is deeper than the deepest sea, higher than the sky, and stronger than the most solid mountain. We can trust him with our lives. We can find refuge in the "shadow of his wings" and drink "from his river of pleasures".

Worship the Lord joyfully (Psalm 100:1-2). When we realize God's abundant blessings our hearts overflow with joy. Many Christians are ungrateful to God. It is evidenced by their frowns, long faces, crabbiness, and refusal to praise God. A common excuse for such ungratefulness is "I can't sing." God's Word says, "make a joyful noise" not make a joyful, perfect harmony. One definition for noise is unwanted sound. Regardless of whether the person next to you wants to hear your praise, God does! A person who stands before the cross and the empty tomb and refuses to lift their voice in praise is like a child who refuses to say thank you.

Acknowledge the Lord's creation and goodness (Psalm 100:3-5). The psalmist draws our attention to the Great Shepherd with the phrase, "We are his people, the sheep of his pasture."

God has a right to own us because it is he who made us and sustains us. In my office is a painting of a shepherd on a rocky cliff reaching for a lost sheep in great peril. The shepherd reaches out even at the risk of his own life. Though we like sheep have gone astray, God's goodness, mercy, faithfulness, and love reaches out to us. How can we refuse to praise him?

The vanity of effort without God (Psalm 127:1-2). Society makes home ownership a symbol of blessing and prosperity. The expert builder will tell you no home will last unless built on a proper foundation. The finest paint in the world cannot hide the cracks in a home built on shaky ground. No city is safe without God's protection (v. 2). No home is secure unless God, our heavenly Father is the keeper. No amount of effort can give you the security he affords. Yet, home after home is built on a foundation other than the Solid Rock, Christ Jesus.

The Value of Family (Psalm 127:3-5). The only valuable treasure we will leave behind in this world will be our children. They are a gift from the Lord. Too many look upon their children more as a burden than a blessing. This scripture compares them to the arrows of a warrior. If every Christian home would take seriously the admonition to train them in the ways of the Lord we would render the worldly army of Satan helpless. Our main goal in life should be to return to our Father in heaven. Our second goal should be to lead our children there also. We cannot do this without the Lord of Life, Jesus.

Hughes is pastor, Friendship Church, Grenada.

Life and Work

The path of obedience



By Laura Russell
Genesis 13:12; 18:17-20, 23-26;
19:29

The lessons we have been studying this month are centered around our following the path of obedience. This week's lesson concerns living righteously in a morally corrupt world. We must remain true to God's abiding purposes regardless of the corruption that surrounds us.

Abram and Lot settle in the land (Gen. 13:12). Over the years of wandering, Abram and Lot had accumulated many flocks and herds. Because the area could only support limited numbers of sheep and cattle, it became evident that Abram and Lot would have to separate. Abram showed a very generous spirit. He gave Lot first choice of the land, and Lot chose what seemed the most desirable part. However, this choice proved to be unwise because the cities of Sodom and Gomorrah were included in this area and they were extremely corrupt.

At first Lot looked toward Sodom, then he pitched his tent toward Sodom, and then later he dwelt in Sodom. These are the steps by which the man and his family moved toward destruction. Even though we live in a morally corrupt world, we do not have to inhabit this world (John 15:19).

The Lord reveals his intention to Abraham (18:17-20). God revealed his opposition to moral corruption by telling Abraham that he was going to destroy Sodom and Gomorrah. The scripture clearly indicates that a divine visitation was to bring judgment and doom upon the cities.

In verse 19 we see that God knew that Abraham would pass on the faith to his children and his household. Abraham taught his family to be serious and devout in the worship of God, and to be honest in their dealings with all men. Believers remain true to God's abiding purposes when they teach their children and others to obey God by living righteously and justly.

Abraham intercedes for Sodom (18:23-26). In his superb prayer of intercession, Abraham revealed the best parts of his character — his generosity, sympathy, sensitivity, his concern for God's righteousness in man. We can learn from Abraham what compassion we should feel for sinners, and how earnestly we should pray for them. The fervent prayer of a righteous man prevails.

Just as Abraham prayed for the cities of Sodom and Gomorrah, so must we, as believers, pray for the morally corrupt world in which we live, because even a small minority of righteous people can be sufficient to call forth God's mercy.

God spares Lot for Abraham's sake (19:29). In this verse we see again the power of intercession. Why was Lot spared? Because "God remembered Abraham." There certainly wasn't much to remember about Lot that would have deserved saving. But Abraham's devotion had thrown a protection around him. So in ways far deeper than we know, the prayer of a good man avails much.

God commands us to flee from the corruption of this world. We must not rest in self and the world, we must not return to sin and Satan, but we must reach toward Christ and heaven and strive to live righteously in a morally corrupt world.

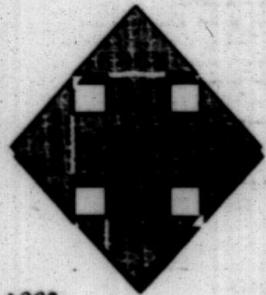
Russell is a member of First Church, Brandon.

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Pictured with Santa is Mr. Doug Duncan, Counselor/Recreation Director for the BCV, receiving a check from Mr. Greg Melvold, President of ABATE.



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Gifts of Honor and Memory

A portion of The Village View is allocated each month to a list of Gifts of Honor and Memory. Many groups and individuals elect to pay tribute to others through this sensitive, meaningful and helpful medium. This feature is hopefully designed to further honor, with taste and respect, those who are and have been special to our special friends.

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EOE

"Looking into the face of hell"

Baptist Peace Fellowship director visits Croatia

By Ken Sehested

Croatia is not yet familiar geography for most North Americans. So it was no surprise to Baptist Peace Fellowship of North America Executive Director Ken Sehested when the airline clerk checking his bag asked, "What country is that in?"

Sehested was among a ten-person interfaith delegation of Muslim, Jewish, and Christian leaders from the U.S. who visited the newly-independent country Dec. 9-18.

"It was like looking into the face of hell," said Sehested in describing the situation in Croatia and in Bosnia-Herzegovina, newly formed nations from republics of what was formerly the country of Yugoslavia.

The purpose of the visit was to "make a concrete, explicit statement that this war cannot be justified in the name of God," Sehested said. The war there pits predominantly Roman Catholic Croatians against predominantly Orthodox Christian Serbians, with Muslims squeezed in the middle.

The group participated in a special "Call to Mercy and Compassion" interfaith worship service calling for peace, held in a Catholic church in Zagreb and organized by Fr. Mirko Mataocik, Franciscan abbot for Croatia. Participants included Muslim, Jewish, and Christian leaders from Croatia and from the U.S.

Former U.S. President Jimmy Carter sent a special message with the delegation, saying he was adding "my prayers to those that are being offered today in Croatia...We must have the courage to face the realities of human cruelty and dedicate our talents to active peacemaking, not simply the passive deplored of violence and abuse."

"Choking with refugees"

The delegation made several visits to camps for refugees, displaced persons and newly-released prisoners of war in the vicinity of Zagreb, as well as meeting with a variety of governmental, United Nations, private relief organization, and reli-

gious leaders in the country.

"The country is choking with refugees," Sehested said, noting that some 700,000 displaced Croatians (forced out of war zones) and

refugees from Bosnia-Herzegovina have crowded into the country, with an estimated additional 100,000 unregistered refugees. Some 600-700 more pour in daily.

"If you could imagine 40 million Canadians and Mexicans suddenly displaced into the U.S., then you have a sense of the proportion of this crisis," he said.

Serbian forces control approximately one-third of Croatian territory and 80% of Bosnia. The interfaith delegation traveled to the city of Karlovac, the edge of the war zone 50 kilometers (31 miles) southwest of Zagreb, to interview recently released civilian prisoners of war from Bosnia.

"The stories of brutality we heard there, at Spanko camp (located just outside Zagreb) for displaced Croatians and at the mosque in Zagreb (providing jam-packed shelter to 450 Muslim refugees) are almost beyond human comprehension," said Sehested. "Especially horrendous is the level of violence against women. Although such violence has been a part of warfare since the beginning of written history, there is credible evidence that what is happening there — especially against the Muslim population in Bosnia — represents a new level of brutality. We heard from multiple first-hand accounts of the use of 'rape camps' by Serbian forces as a systematic tactic of war, as part of their strategy of 'ethnic cleansing'. This is more than the infamous 'comfort brothels' established by German Nazis and the Japanese in China during World War II. This seems to be the deliberate attempt by Serbian forces in Bosnia to actually dominate by reproduction and re-population."

Sehested was quick to point out that atrocities are not limited to the Serbian forces fighting in Bosnia. There are documented cases of brutality committed by Croats and Muslims as well. "But I am convinced," said Sehested, "that Serbian desire for dominance in the region — fueled in significant measure by the memory of Nazi-controlled Croatian repression of Serbs during World War II — is the root cause of this vicious cycle of violence."

Quoting a 17th century European

general on the reality of wartime atrocities, Sehested noted that "the first act is an atrocity, the subsequent acts are mere justice." Thus you get a "self-perpetuating cycle of violence. No one remembers the first act; and thus every new act is rationalized in the mind of the perpetrator as eye-for-an-eye justice."

Accurate documentation of casualties in the war — which flared briefly in 1991 in Slovenia (in the northwest, bordering Italy and Austria), spreading then to Croatia and now concentrated in Bosnia — is hard to come by. Estimates of the number of deaths range as high as 100,000.

At the end of its visit the delegation approved a statement calling on the U.S. to immediately increase its quota of refugees from the former Yugoslavia and for "an immediate investigation into the growing body of evidence that large numbers of women and children are being subject to rape, torture, and murder." Sehested noted that increasing the numbers accepted, by the U.S. and other nations, will "hasten the release of Bosnians" currently held in Serbian prison camps.

Croatian Baptists Involved

The Baptist population of Croatia is so small (some 2,000 in number) that Sehested wondered if he would be able to make contacts. However, contacts at the Baptist World Alliance, the European Baptist Federation and the mission agencies of both American and Southern Baptists provided several key names.

As it turned out, the person who organized the delegation's itinerary is himself a Baptist. Boris Peterlin, assistant professor at the Institute for Linguistic Research, is director of Christian Information Service in Zagreb, an agency he began in February 1992 with ecumenical support in order to provide timely and accurate information on the region's crisis.

Sehested is executive director, Baptist Peace Fellowship of North America, headquartered in Memphis.



EYE OF THE STORM — Residue of Russian influence, as seen in the Cyrillic text on signs outside the church where Southern Baptist missionaries Bill and Debbie Steele minister in Belgrade, Serbia, stands as testament to the countless cultural conflicts that have turned the former country of Yugoslavia into a killing field. Despite the storm that rages all around them, they strive to deliver the message of salvation to a people desperately in need of the good news. Bill maintains his preaching schedule at 80-member First Baptist Church, while Debbie leads weekly prayer sessions for women and helps with clothes distribution to the poor. (BP photo by Mike Creswell)

Newest in Books & Book Reviews

Let's Talk About AIDS and Sex, by Rodney Gage, Broadman. Never before have we been faced with an epidemic like AIDS, which has the potential to wipe out an entire society. Gage presents God's plan for the "sacred sex" of marriage. And he lets those suffering from sexual sin and AIDS know of God's forgiveness and hope for a new beginning in their lives.

The Identity of Jesus of Nazareth, by Carl F. Henry, published by Broadman Press. The book targets serious students of Christology. Henry revisits the Chalcedon definition of the person of Christ, questioning its validity for today. Although the book is not a comprehensive presentation of the doctrine of Jesus Christ, it is

an up-to-date reflection of many of the crucial concerns of Christology.

The Sacrificed Life: Keys to Intimacy with God, by Bobby Welch, published by Broadman Press. The three essential elements of intimacy with God are spending time with him, living in obedience to his call and commands, and studying his Word. To have these elements the believer must be guided, even consumed, by desire and discipline: a desire to know God and discipline to achieve it.

Children of Divorce: Helping Kids When Their Parents are Apart, by Debbie Barr, published by Zondervan Publishing House. The book is a revised edition of *Caught in the Crossfire*. The

author offers help in dealing with a child's questions about divorce and shows adults how to care for children of divorce. It also examines the spiritual impact of divorce, outlining how Christianity in action can make a difference.

Parenting a Child with Special Needs, by Rosemarie S. Cook, published by Zondervan Publishing House. From her own experiences as the mother of an adult with a disability and her training as professional counselor, Cook brings encouragement to parents of children with disabilities. She offers guidance in balancing individual and family needs with that of the disabled child, and shows parents how to turn their difficulties into opportunities for spiritual growth.

Planning and Building Church Facilities, by Gwenn E. McCormick, published by Broadman Press. McCormick explores all the important aspects of planning and building church facilities. He also includes appendixes on a variety of topics, including a section on "Rules of Thumb" which is very helpful. McCormick does not include information on floor plans or specifics for worship centers, educational buildings, and recreation facilities. The book, written to replace Church Property/Building Guidebook, is a must for all staff persons, building committees, and involved laymen who are considering a building, remodeling or relocation project. (Review by Matt Buckles, church building services consultant with the MBCB.)

Baptist Record

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